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621 628 volve any reciprocal rights or obligations, the increased efficiency of each band being the reward of each.

## P 439 621 121 C 439 621 121 C [611] [591] ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BAND AND VILLAGE

This has already been dealt with to some extent, and has been seen to involve a question of mutual convenience rather than of economic necessity. What needs to be emphasized, perhaps, is that there can in effect be an effective economic relationship only between a territorial band and a territorial village, without regard to the composition of either. The territorial village is likely to be far more consistent in composition, moving less frequently, less far and less at random than the band, and above all following a clearly patrilineal/patrilocal system of descent and marriage. Any village, then, may be said to be in an economic relationship with any hunting band whose territory includes that village. In addition, it may have a relationship with other bands whose territories are sufficiently close to allow easy exchange.

P 439 621 608 571 The band is similarly in relationship with a village or villages according to territorial considerations. Within that band each individual will also have personal-exchange relationships with his villager *karé* brother, with his *kpara*, and with any other individual villager in the local village if neither his *karé* nor his *kpara* are there. He may maintain any, all or none of these individual relationships as it pleases him; there is no institutional means of compelling him one way or the other from either the band or the village. He decides entirely in terms of his own needs, those of his family and the general needs of the band. If he finds himself in conflict with the band then he either forms a subsection with two or three others or he goes to visit another band. Generally, however, a band tolerates complete individualism in this respect. The obligation to share, however, does not apply to village foods. Any Mbuti who does not enter into an exchange relationship with a villager, or who does not steal what he wants, goes without unless his relatives or friends voluntarily offer him of their own.

P [156]

P 439 608 571 The decision of the individual Mbuti often shows rather more forethought than is shown or called for in his other economic activities. The probable length of absence of or from his *karé* or *kpara* is taken into consideration. If an Mbuti has a particularly generous exchange partner, he will, in that partner's absence, maintain at least nominal

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band to the village as its *capita* or *sultani*. In the Epulu band, Njobo was an undisputed great hunter, knew the territory as well as anyone and had killed four elephants single-handed. He was a good enough Mbuti not to attempt to dominate any hunting discussion in the forest, merely to take a normal part. If he ever appeared to be overly aggressive or insistent he was shouted down and ridiculed, although highly popular. He was also the one chosen to represent the band to the villagers. Ekianga, on the other hand, was less generally popular and was the source of some friction, having three wives (one the sister of another prominent member of the band), but he was a fine hunter, endowed with exceptional physical stamina, and he too knew the territory well. Even at the height of his unpopularity he was one of the most effective "leaders" of the hunt. So was Nikiabo, a youth who had achieved some notoriety by killing a buffalo when barely out of childhood. Although a bachelor, he had a net of his own and took a prominent part in all hunting discussions. Makubasi, a young married hunter, was also accorded special respect because of his hunting prowess and his physical strength, combined with his knowledge of the territory. But while these four can be singled out as exceptional, they could either separately or together be outvoted by the rest of the hunters. On such occasions they were compelled either to give their assent to the popular decision or to refrain from joining the hunt that day. None of them had the slightest authority over any others. Nor was any moral pressure brought to bear in influencing a decision through personal considerations or respect. The only such moral consideration ever mentioned was that when the band arrived at a decision, it was considered "good," and that it would "please the forest." Anyone not associating himself with the decision was, then, likely to displease the forest, and this was considered "bad." Any individual intent on strengthening his own argument might appeal to the forest on grounds that his point of view was "good" and "pleasing"; only the ultimate general decision, however, would determine the validity of his claim.

Finally, it has to be pointed out that while the forest is appealed to almost as an arbiter, and is considered as imposing the standards and even the leadership, which all Mbuti follow, this only holds good in the forest, where the forest directly "feeds its children." Once in the village, actions concerning the village are never judged by whether or not they are pleasing to the forest; a totally different set of values pertains.

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554 The various fields in which we can speak of authority fall into three
121 main categories—economic, ritual, and legal. In the first two, by authority is meant prominence of activity and participation in discussion in what is, generally, a normal situation. In the last category, legal, the situation is abnormal, one of dispute, and by authority is meant prominence in the settling of that dispute. Nowhere does it have any validity unless backed by common assent. Yet it is more than mere influence, for in each field certain classes of individuals are recognized as having the right and ability to interpret the pleasure of the forest.

554 Table 8[1] indicates the distribution of this "authority" throughout
561 the band. It will be seen that it is evenly divided between the sexes
[562] and among all adult age levels; only the children are not accorded any authority except among themselves. Further, authority is located at one age level or another or with the nuclear family, with few exceptions. For the life crises (excluding birth), authority is divided between the youths and the elders. Youths and elders also share responsibility for the camp while the hunt is away, even if some of the hunters remain behind.

554 There are many examples of Mbuti who have appeared in the role
[648] of leader vis-à-vis the village, but as their authority was nil in relation to forest life, they need not concern us here. Their only function in the forest, other than their normal role as hunters, was to communicate the wishes of the one group of people to the other.

554 The only individual who might be recognized as occupying a special
• 156 political position in the life of the hunting band, on any ground other
522 than age, is the camp clown. He is usually a hunter, and his position
626 is unofficial, depending on his abilities as an actor and a clown. He
627 is not appointed, and there is no special name for him or his position. However, every band seems to have its clown. His function is to act as a buff between disputants, deflecting the more serious disputes away from their original sources, absolving other individuals of blame by accepting it himself. Frequently he will end a dispute simply through the use of ridicule, and although such ridicule may be taken as a form of judgment, the essential point is that once again its objective is to divert attention from the source of the dispute and also to divert blame from anyone who is clearly in the wrong. The major concern of all, except possibly the prime disputants, is that the dispute shall be ended, and frequently by creating or reviving another, lesser dispute the clown brings the disputants into the same frame of mind.

[1] [see page 330-- Analyst]

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Everyone recognizes that the slightest rift in the band can lead directly to hunger through failure in economic co-operation.

The clown, however, never passes judgment or exerts authority (except through ridicule); he is better considered, in this role, as a professional scapegoat, a person outwardly not deserving respect or authority. Because of his antics, and the Mbuti love of mime, he is popular, but the blame he takes upon himself is often expressed with feeling, and it is only his ability to turn ridicule upon himself and to laugh at himself that rescues him from what would otherwise be constant opprobrium. His status as a hunter is unaffected by his role as a clown, and depends solely on merit.

There is one type of person, however, and there were two examples in the Epulu band, who leans toward the assumption of individual authority. Every Mbuti is nothing if not a powerful individualist who expresses his opinions with force and clarity. But he generally does not claim any support for his opinions other than his own experience and ability. Some men, because of exceptional hunting skill, may come to resent it when their views are disregarded, but if they try to force those views they are very promptly subjected to ridicule. Ekianga and Njobo were two such hunters in the Epulu band. Ekianga was constantly being ridiculed for his matrimonial difficulties (he was a rare Mbuti, with three wives, living in the same camp with his in-laws by sister exchange). Even his elder sister ridiculed him at times. Njobo was sometimes rather unkindly ridiculed for infertility. Out of four successive wives he only managed to sire one child, a son, who became crippled in adolescence with tuberculosis of the leg. His current wife had given birth to a daughter who out of politeness was generally accepted as Njobo's, though all the evidence pointed in other directions. He was, at least, accredited as the social father.

Of the two, Ekianga probably had the more influence in the band, and his unique position as a polygamist was undoubtedly related to both his prowess and his pride. There is, however, no parallel with the situation acutely described by Lévi-Strauss (1955, pp. 325–39) for the Nambikwara. Ekianga was indeed a potential leader, but the band did not derive its major characteristics from him. Still less was generosity demanded of him (in return for his three wives), and by no means was his undoubted dynamism contrasted by a passivity of the rest of the band. Nonetheless, his three wives and all the consequent "noise" were accepted by the band, and although it was not spoken of as an exchange, it was expected of Ekianga that he would be a

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particular asset in the hunt. This was his world. He had little or no interest in the village.

Njobo, on the other hand, was excellent at dealing with the village and seemingly enjoyed it, for brief periods. He was much closer to the Nambikwara, who "delights in responsibility" and who "finds enough reward in those burdens that their fellows shy away from" (*ibid*). Although his wives were successive, it is worth mentioning that his penultimate wife, mother of his crippled son, was not remarried and was still considered by all, including Njobo, as his senior wife. Although she lived with her natal band, she sometimes visited Njobo (particularly when he was in the village), and he also visited her, at which times they acted in all respects like man and wife. Njobo refused to allow her to live with him in the forest hunting camps.

Njobo's father, Biyonga, had not been outstanding in any way. He had been dead a number of years, and nobody seemed to remember him for any particular qualities.[1] Njobo, on the other hand, was among the finest hunters, and unique in having killed, single-handed, four elephants. He had also participated in successful communal elephant and buffalo hunts, and apart from being a hunter of the utmost courage, he was also a man of the utmost integrity. He possessed, in abundance, all those qualities the Mbuti admire most except a good singing voice. He himself was modest, and usually self-effacing in the hunting camp. He came to the fore in relations with the village, and frequently acted as "headman" of the band in that respect. However, if ever he spoke too loudly in camp, he was either shouted down or laughed at; ridicule he accepted and even welcomed. I only heard him make a retort once, when reference was made to his son's inability to walk without a stick. He said, "It is never good for one man to talk too much, particularly if he is right. But if an Mbuti has something to say, what else can he do?"

Njobo had no brothers, but his sisters had produced a number of children, several of whom, married and single, were members of the same band. The only sister who was in the band was a widow, and her children were elsewhere. She acted as mother to all her nephews and nieces, among which were two youths, cousins to each other, and each recently married. When Njobo was away from the band for a

[1] Although there was a general reluctance to mention the dead by name, or even to talk about them, there was no rigid prohibition. It was a question more of there being no particular occasion for such mention. If Biyonga had been exceptional in any way, it would certainly have arisen sooner or later in ordinary conversation, and equally certainly in response to questioning.

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When Njobo was away from the band for a number of months with his son, these two nephews moved in. Normally they were not resident. Asuku brought not only his wife but also his father. He insisted on Njobo's wife looking after them, building their hut and so forth. Although Asuku was not liked, he would have been tolerated had he not tried to assume the status of Njobo, but this assumption moved him into an age group to which he did not belong, and he was consequently always being shouted down.

On one such occasion, Asuku was annoyed at the hunt for not leaving as soon as he would have liked. He strode up and down, telling everyone that they were lazy. When they shouted him down, he told them he was Njobo's son, so "I *am* Njobo, and this is Njobo's camp." When he was ignored he then turned from one great hunter to the other, and they all ignored him except one, who placed a stick on the ground at Asuku's feet and said, "There is a stick; if you are so big, pick it up and hit me." Asuku then turned to the elders, and Moké, the most influential of all, laughed in his face. At this, Asuku entered his hut and stayed inside for the whole day until dark.

On another occasion Asuku tried to say that his net was Njobo's net, and he was therefore entitled to Njobo's position in the hunt and should not be out on the fringes. He had chosen a time when his mother, Njobo's sister, was visiting, and the hunters did not want to make a dispute of the matter in front of her, out of respect for Njobo. However, one of them, Njobo's paternal cousin Manyalibo, went up to Asuku and said that if Asuku wanted that position it would mean setting his net next to him, and if that happened he would set up his net alone rather than stay in the hunt. This temporarily checked Asuku, and that evening old Moké gathered the senior hunters around him and, for once not smiling, he raised his arm and pointed across the camp to Asuku. This is considered a grave indictment, and the whole camp fell silent. Moké, very quietly, and talking as if only to the hunters but never lowering his arm or taking his eyes off Asuku, said, "That is a completely bad man. I have been watching and I have seen with my eyes, and my spirit [*roho*] makes me speak. He makes noise all the time, and he is the cause of all the noise in the camp. I would like to throw him out forever. But he is a relative of Njobo, and we should wait and see—and watch. That person is a child and has no right to share conversation with men. He is not of us. He comes from far off. I don't like people from far off. They are bad for any camp; they kill any camp completely." He then changed his attention and pointed at Ekianga, the other hunter of

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renown, the man with a troublesome trio of wives, himself a frequent cause of friction in the camp. Shaking his finger at Ekianga, Moké said, "And that is a man, completely clean. He pleases my spirit [*roho*] very much."

After the evening meal Moké stood in the middle of the camp and pointed to the hearth of each great hunter and male elder in turn, naming them, and saying, "This is my man, this is my hearth, for it is his hearth; but it is not Asuku's." He even pointed over to Cephu's camp, and included Cephu. He then went back to his hut, leaving Asuku at the central fire with two elders.

Despite this display of disaffection, however, Asuku remained on. He had not only been pointed at, but named in public, and another had been named as good while he had been named as bad—a double disgrace. Ridicule, after this, was pointless, and although everyone wanted to be rid of Asuku, their respect for Njobo, coupled with Njobo's continued absence, prevented them from doing more than ignoring the offender as far as possible. After some three months, however, Asuku began to frequent the village for long periods. Although this meant he was at least not in the camp, which was thereby much improved, the hunters found this the ultimate insult and disloyalty. When he refused a summons to return to the hunting camp, old Moké once again stood in midcamp, an honored position from which any Mbuti, young or old, is free to claim the attention of everyone. He said that since now Asuku had become a villager, he was no longer an Mbuti, no longer "ours"; he belonged far away, very far away indeed. Pointing to the central fire in the section of the camp that included Njobo's wife and three great hunters, and divers others both related and unrelated, he said, "This is a matter of the forest. This is our hearth. It is Njobo's hearth. It is not Asuku's hearth. He belongs in the village or completely and absolutely far away."

There were murmurs of assent from everyone, and Moké looked around to each individual hearth, asking, "Is my spirit [*roho*] right?" Agreement was unanimous, though subdued, and Moké simply said, "*Asi-to*"—"It is finished." The next day word was sent by a youth to Asuku's father, in the territory of Effundi Somali, a few miles on the far side of the Epulu. I was told that the youth simply gave a verbatim account of what had happened. Asuku never returned to the Epulu band, and left the village, returning to his father's territory.

His cousin, Mbaaka, was not such a stranger in the band, but soon after his marriage, and some six months after the Asuku episode, he

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began more and more frequently to talk from midcamp. Like Asuku, he complained about laziness and bad hunting, common enough complaints but seldom aired from midcamp. When he began to claim special attention by virtue of being Njobo's "son," however, he was promptly ridiculed. People stopped listening to him, even from midcamp, and dared him to name them—a procedure that commands attention. Even unmarried youths called out, "Your noise will kill us all," and children began to imitate his whining voice. Masisi, a cousin of Njobo and, with Manyalibo, about to move from the status of hunter to that of elder, took Mbaaka aside at one point and talked to him quietly, recalling what had happened to Asuku.

Seeing that Mbaaka at last had begun to listen to reason, his brother, who up till then had never interfered, made a loud and rude joke that brought the whole camp down with laughter, then said, "Everyone is crazy—I'm going to sleep," and promptly went to sleep. Masisi then returned to midcamp with Mbaaka and said that if anyone else tried to be funny he would turn himself into a villager and bewitch everyone. A youth took up the thread and said that the village was responsible for all the noise anyway, because his girl friend never listened to him any more and was a bad cook (a typical pygmaean non sequitur). This rather forced good humor persisted throughout the next day, with the women telling jokes and laughing loudly the moment the conversation drifted in the direction of Mbaaka's former complaints. There were a few more remarks to the effect that the village was indeed responsible for all the noise, and the rest of Mbaaka's stay (two further months) was unmarred by any repeated claims to privilege through kinship to Njobo.

It is plain, then, that while any movement toward individual authority, conscious or otherwise, is sharply countered, and while individual authority is virtually nil, there is nonetheless a clear basic framework to support the values of the hunting band. There is the division of leadership, according to field, throughout the entire band, yet there is the midcamp site from which anyone may harangue all present. Although he has no means of compelling attention, it is generally accorded, and may be further compelled by pointing to or naming the individuals concerned. Further it is plain that the elders, including those hunters whose position is being gradually taken over by their children, act as final arbitrators, always careful to stress that what they say is a matter of their opinion, or of their heart. Only when unanimity is beyond question is an opinion or an action con-

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sidered "pleasing to the forest." Asuku had placed himself, physically and morally, beyond the forest.

In the two instances cited so far, although the kin relationship of Asuku and Mbaaka to Njobo was the source of their claim to special privileges, this was recognized as a village attitude, and a valid village argument. It is noteworthy that the details of the relationship were never spelled out once, except by Asuku and Mbaaka. The attitude of all the Mbuti was one of respect for Njobo, but of equal recognition of all those who shared the same central hearth, including some who were not even affines. It was stated very clearly by Moké that though Asuku was a member of the band by virtue of having shared the same hearth, he had no more privileges than anyone else of that hearth, and was under the same obligations of respect and responsibility to his elders.

There was one other elder who could claim the same respect as Moké, by reason of age, and that was Tungana. But Moké had the added advantages of being a widower and virtually unrelated to anyone in the band. He claimed fictitious relationship with Tungana, it being said that the same foster mother fed them both, and he frequently gave Tungana's "clan" name as being his own. Clan names were seldom mentioned in disputes, except in a village context, and even then they in fact referred to a unit that was either nonlineal or cognatic, and not confined to one clan. Rather than differentiate between lineal units, the Mbuti used the concept of the hearth (*kuma*). Each family had its own hearth, but there were also several central hearths, each shared by a number of families.

Each camp, except the smallest, was distinguished by several such central hearths, effectively breaking the camp into subcamps that usually revealed a line of fission or fusion, but which frequently ran counter to all kinship considerations. As far as the Epulu band was concerned (and I believe this to be true of many other bands), authority was again, as with other aspects of life, more associated with age and territory than with kinship. Each section of the camp was, in a limited sense, a political unit, and sometimes disputes would remain confined to one section without spreading to others. A man could invoke kinship or friendship to go to the aid of a disputant in another section, if he wished, but somebody like Moké was even more free to wander wherever he liked. The rules of self-help among the Mbuti are quite simple. It is perfectly proper to hit someone with anything wooden; it is not at all proper to draw blood, nor to hit any-

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754 578 11. Sau was the mother of Amabosu, who had exchanged sisters with Ekianga. Sau was regarded by the villagers as a dangerous witch, a role she filled with zeal and which the Mbuti found useful in two ways. It provided them with a scapegoat in the forest just as it was a handy excuse for any misadventure in the village. In either situation the latent dramatic possibilities appealed enormously to the old lady's histrionic susceptibilities. One day Sau asked the wife of Mbaaka, a [535] nephew of Njobo, for some food. She was refused. That night she did a little dance in front of Mbaaka's hut, her usual way of showing [224] her displeasure. The next day, on the hunt, Masisi's son was about to run in bare-handed to catch a sharp-toothed *sindula* (chevrotain), but Amabosu persuaded him to take his spear. He did so, and then collided with Mbaaka, spearing him in the side.

There was actually some bad feeling between Amabosu and Mbaaka, and in case this was brought up (making it seem that Amabosu had deliberately caused his injury) the discussion of the incident was quickly turned to the refusal of Mbaaka's wife to give Sau food. She thus became the prime target for blame, with Sau acting as a secondary scapegoat, being criticized for dancing her "bad 578 dance" outside Mbaaka's hut. In case anyone should take it too se- 522 riously, Manyalibo promptly started making fun of Sau's dance, flap- 626 ping his hands to imitate Sau's pendent breasts. This was taken up by the children, who would not be content until Sau herself gave a demonstration.

626 That evening several hunters stood in midcamp[6] and said what a 683 good camp it was, and commented on the good hunting. No further 648 word was said about the spearing, except in the village, where the 571 respective *kpara* went to the tribunal to effect reconciliation (between 608 themselves) and blood payment. Amabosu's *kpara* agreed to pay sixty [186] francs to Mbaaka's *kpara*, Masisi's *kpara* paying only forty. This news caused great hilarity in the camp, and the comment that villagers were 626 animals, always "eating" each other. Between the Mbuti themselves I 683 could find no evidence of blood payment of any kind, though any incident involving the drawing of blood is bound to provoke discus-

[685] [457] [427] failure to share in time of need is considered a far greater crime than is petty (i.e., individual) theft.

[6] The importance of the "midcamp" position is that it defines the viewpoint of the person talking. An individual talking from his own hearth talks as an individual. If he talks from midcamp he is talking a band rather than an individual point of view. Similarly [621] the *kumamolimo* is central, but more restricted in area and viewpoint, being used as a [156] vantage point to discuss with the whole band matters pertaining to the *molimo*.

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115 Pygmy and said he didn't mind. He suggested 40 francs per week,
123 a wage considerably below what he had been earning as a bugler. He said that if I could afford a present when I left, that would be fine. Pygmies have a way of letting you know when they really mean what they say, and this was one of those times. In all the many months that followed, Kenge never once asked me for money, beyond his meager salary. And once when I was short of cash and we were down in the village he spent his own savings to buy food for the two of us.

123 In the course of my two previous trips I had come to know most of the Pygmies in this area quite well, and the initiation had cemented our friendship, though at the best I suspect they regarded me merely as a rather harmless outsider. I was soon brought up to date on all
179 that happened during the past three years. Kenge said that the hunt-
[464] ing group was still hunting and gathering, but that they sometimes
[434] came down to the village and spent time there, earning money at the Station de Chasse or at the motel, money which they promptly spent on food, tobacco, and palm wine at the new stores. They still brought in meat for their *BaKpara*, or "masters," and took plantation
177 foods in return. But, encouraged by the administration, they had
241 begun to make their own plantation in the forest. This was the worst possible news; once the Pygmies have plantations their hunting-and-gathering existence is made impossible. They become tied to one place and do not have time to follow the game.

241 The two busiest workers on the plantation and those who had the
156 finest clearings were Njobo and Masisi. They were two of the most
[551] influential hunters of the group. Njobo had killed two elephants
[224] single-handed, and two more in company with other Pygmies. He had three wives, but had only one child, a son by his second wife. The son, Nyange, had been a healthy lad when I had last seen him, but now he was crippled with tuberculosis of the leg bone.

156 Masisi was a relative of Njobo's, and though not such a renowned

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hunter he was blessed with a large family. He had a powerful and penetrating voice, took an active part in any dispute, and usually managed to shout his opponents down, which is one of the chief ways the Pygmies have of settling a dispute. His family were all strikingly fine-looking, with almost Greek-like appearance although of normal Pygmy stature—under four and a half feet.

Most Pygmies have unmistakable features, other than height, that set them apart from the Negroes. Their legs are short in proportion to their bodies; they are powerful, muscular, and usually splay-backed; their heads are round and the eyes are set wide apart; they have flat noses almost as broad as their mouths are long. The head hair grows in peppercorn tufts, and the body hair varies from one extreme to the other—some Pygmies are covered thickly from head to foot. Another characteristic is the alert expression of the face, direct and unafraid, as keen as the body, which is always ready to move with speed and agility at a moment's notice. All these traits are uncharacteristic of the Negro tribes that live in the forest around the Pygmies. These tribes are a rather shifty, lazy lot who survived the ravages of Tippu Tip's slave-traders by treachery and deceit. In the villages you will sometimes find Pygmies who are like this too, but they are scorned by the BaMbuti who have remained in the forest and have refused to be settled.

Masisi's children had finer features, with longer faces and straight noses, and they were slimmer and less stocky. His eldest son, Ageronga, was a fine hunter and often used to take his father's place.

Another member of the same clan, a cousin of Masisi's, was Manyalibo. A traditionalist, he was older than Masisi, and the son of an elder brother of Masisi's father, yet he had less say in everyday matters because he was not such an active hunter. Nor did he have such a fine family. He had two daughters of his own, but no sons, and although he had adopted a distant nephew, Madyadya, the boy was proving a great trial, having been spoiled by everyone, as orphans

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usually are. Both Manyalibo and his wife were great humorists, and they made use of the powers of ridicule to break up some of the more serious disputes, because there is nothing that upsets a Pygmy more than being laughed at.

The oldest member of the group, a member of the same family though even more distantly related, was old Tungana, who had so many children and grandchildren that neither he nor his wife could remember all their names. Strangely enough, he was a progressive Pygmy, and whereas Manyalibo was constantly decrying the Pygmy plantation in his deep bass voice, Tungana thought it was fine. He also thought living near the village was a good thing as there was so much good food to be had for the stealing. And wasn't stealing easier than hunting? I think the truth was that poor old Tungana was getting too old to follow the hunting band with ease, and he was afraid of being abandoned. In fact, he often remained behind in the village when the rest were far off in the forest, and one of his many sons would come in every few days bringing the old couple gifts of meat and forest fruits.

Moke was another of the elders. He claimed a fictional relationship with Tungana because it made him feel at home, since he had no real relatives in the group other than his own children. Moke was the greatest traditionalist of all, and when the Pygmy plantations were mentioned in front of him he just laughed dryly to himself and smiled his toothless smile, saying he had not tasted any Pygmy bananas yet, but if any grew then he would be glad to eat them. It was Moke who had come with Kolongo and Njobo to cut the marks on my forehead three years earlier. Kolongo had been as much of a traditionalist as Moke, as indeed were all his family, particularly the wizened old mother, Balekimito, and his oldest sister, Asofalinda, who was now a widow and thoroughly enjoying her freedom. Moke had thought of her as a companion for his old age, but Asofalinda liked life as it was, so Moke was still a widower and she a widow.

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## THE GOOD DEATH OF BALEKIMITO

About a year after I had left the last time, Kolongo had been killed by a crocodile, and his mother had been so upset she had left the group and her entire family, and gone back to her old village. Her other son, Ekianga, remained as head of the family. It was a different clan but related by marriage to Njobo and Masisi and Manyalibo.

Ekianga was anything but a traditionalist in some ways, though in others he was as conservative as the rest of his relatives. His most untraditional act was to have three wives. He was a very great hunter, and as vain as could be, and he liked imitating the ways of the outside world, where it is a sign of wealth to have many wives. The Pygmies say that one is enough to manage, and judging by Ekianga's constant domestic difficulties they are right. He was hairy, broad-chested, and powerful almost to the point of ugliness, and from somewhere he had learned how to put on a perfect toothpaste smile. He always built his huts a different shape from everyone else's, and in the Pygmy camp near the village his house was the biggest and the smartest of them all, sheltering his entire ménage.

His youngest wife was a beautiful girl called Kamaikan. She was even lighter than most Pygmies, yellowish-brown, instead of the more usual coffee-brown. Her brother and mother also lived with the same hunting group, and there was constant friction, for on marrying her Ekianga had given a "sister"—actually a fairly distant relative—to her brother, Amabosu, in exchange. This exchange is made with the full consent of all parties, but none the less it leads to a division of loyalties, and Amabosu was a very temperamental Pygmy. He was a fine hunter, but he was particularly renowned as the best singer and best drummer and best dancer in the area; for these qualities alone his prestige was enormous. His skinny old mother, Sau, was not without fame of her own. Old and infirm people, amongst the Pygmies, are regarded, not exactly with suspicion or mistrust, but with apprehension. In a vigorous community of this kind where mobility is essential, cripples and infirm people can be a great handi-

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156 888 cap and may even endanger the safety of the group. Hence there are numerous legends of old people's being left to die if they cannot keep up with the group as it moves from camp to camp. Like old Tungana, Sau knew this, and although she was still healthy she made sure everyone knew it by taking the most vigorous and unexpected part in any dispute, her sharp acid voice betraying a certain bitterness at the way she was treated. For not only was Sau old, she was also almost alone, with only her son and daughter near her, while everyone else had brothers, sisters, cousins, parents, children and grandchildren.

[154] The Negroes said that Sau was a witch and should be killed or driven away. I used to look at her, squatting over the fire outside her hut, knees hunched up to her chin, staring silently into the middle of the camp. She certainly seemed sinister, as she gazed without blinking, taking in everything that was going on, not moving hour after hour. Her son Amabosu, the great singer, had those same staring eyes, and at times looked even more like a witch than his [123] mother did. This family nearly always built their hut next to mine, and I came to be very fond of them.

621 578 [583] If these names are confusing to the reader, they at least help to give a picture of the apparent confusion created in any Pygmy camp by the complicated network of intermarriage and sister-exchange. Essentially a camp is a happy-go-lucky, friendly place, but it is also full of all sorts of little tensions that can suddenly become magnified out of all proportion and lead to full-scale disputes.

621 This particular group was a rather large one, consisting of the two main families—that of Njobo and Masisi, Tungana and Manyalibo; and that of Ekianga and his relatives, including Sau and Amabosu. But to add to the tensions there was a third group which was constantly trying to attach itself. It was intermarried heavily with the other two, as often happens in an attempt to strengthen bonds and establish an unbreakable relationship.

## THE GOOD DEATH OF BALEKIMITO

The leader of this group—although with Pygmies it is always unwise to talk of single "leaders"—was a wily but rather naïve Pygmy by the name of Cephu. Most Pygmies use their real names among themselves, but they all have additional names, in KiNgwana, by which they are known to the Negroes. Cephu always used his KiNgwana name, pronounced just slightly differently from the Negro equivalent, Sefu. No matter what language they are speaking, the Pygmies always retain their own peculiar intonation, which renders the language almost incomprehensible to non-Pygmies.

Cephu's family was large, but not large enough, even with all his in-laws, to form a hunting group of his own. To do this you have to have at the very least six or seven individual families, each with its own hunting net; only in this way can you have an efficient net-hunt, with the women and children driving the animals into the long circle of nets, joined end to end. Cephu's group was usually not more than four families, and so he tacked himself onto Njobo and Ekianga. Sometimes this worked out well enough, as Pygmies are great people for visiting their relatives, and one or the other group might be depleted by absences. But at other times they would have a number of families visiting them, and then the addition of Cephu and all his relatives made the whole group far too large and unwieldy. But as he had taken the precaution of exchanging sisters, he could not be refused, and so he would make his own little camp close by connected by a narrow trail. He would follow the others whenever they went hunting and was invariably blamed when the hunt was not a success. At night he and his family kept to themselves, seldom venturing into the main camp. They sat around their own fire, offended, aloof, and rather unhappy, but with hides as tough as that of a forest buffalo and impervious to the most obvious hints and thinly veiled insults. But Cephu was the best storyteller in the forest.

Kenge's position in the group was an undefined and rather happy one. His father had married a sister of Njobo and joined his wife's

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stalled themselves with the rest of the family at the north end of the camp. Shortly afterward Cephu arrived. Ekianga had brought news that he was on his way, and there had been a lot of argument. In spite of the auspicious killing of a sondu on the first day, the hunting since had not been very good, and already the camp was large. There were about twenty-five huts now, forming two circles, one on each side of the central barrier of brush and trees.

In the early afternoon there was a silence in the camp and Kenge stood listening, looking across the camp to the south. He turned and told me that Cephu was not far away and would be here in a quarter of an hour. Almost to the minute Cephu arrived, leading a band of another five families. Most of them stopped at the edge of the camp at the south end; only Cephu and one other came over to the main camp to greet us and announce his arrival. A new fire had been built in the center of our clearing, opposite Manyalibo's hut, and Cephu sat down there, one of the younger men getting up to give him his chair. He asked about the hunting and gave us news of the village. He said that his brother, who was a cripple, had not wanted to come so far and had made a small camp half way, near Apa Kadiketu. After a few minutes he left, not having been offered anything to eat or any tobacco to smoke, and started building his own camp about fifty yards to the south of the extreme edge of the clearing. He built a tight little circle of huts, connected by a path to the main trail on one side and to the camp on the other. He chose that site because he had some relatives at that end of our camp.

The same day Manyalibo's daughter also arrived, with her husband, Ausu. Ausu was a handsome Pygmy, strong, and clever at hunting both with spear and with net. He had caught many wild pig, although he was only in his early twenties, and once, when still in his teens, he had nearly been killed by one. His wife, Kondabate, was a Pygmy belle if there ever was one, and she knew it. The two had been married for nearly three years but had no children. Kon-

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dabate still had her fine maiden's figure, with firm upstanding breasts. Nobody ever mentioned the fact that they were childless. Kondabate decorated herself more than any other Pygmy girl I have known, and by every possible means, Negro and Pygmy. She not only dyed her body with designs of vines and fruits, painted on with the black juice of the gardenia fruit, but she also had elaborate patterns cicatrized on her stomach, and her teeth were filed to sharp points so that when she smiled or laughed, as she frequently did, she looked just a little dangerous. Kondabate decided to build her house to the north of the hillock, so that she was next to old Sau, and opposite her father.

During the afternoon Amabosu, Sau's son—the great singer—went around from hut to hut with Manyalibo's adopted son, Madyadya. (Manyalibo had offered his molimo for Balekimito's festival, as Ekianga said he had none.) The two youths stood outside the entrance to each hut with a basket and a length of cord made from *nkusa* vine, the kind of cord used for making hunting nets. Madyadya held one end of the cord while Amabosu tied the other in a noose and laid it in the doorway of the hut. The owner of the hut, or her husband if she was not there, would put a small bunch of bananas in the noose, or a manioc root, or a bundle of mushrooms, or perhaps even a small piece of meat, and Madyadya would jerk the string taut. After a brief mock struggle he would haul in the catch and put it in his basket, then go on to the next hut. From every hut the two collected an offering of food in this way. When their basket was full they hung it up on a tree stump beside the central fire that was now blazing between Manyalibo's hut and the hut his daughter was busily making. This fire had itself been made up from offerings of wood collected from each family hearth. I remembered seeing Manyalibo go around taking an ember or log from every fireplace, whether the owners were there or not.

I noticed that only men sat at this fire and asked Kenge why this

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long trumpet, with Madyadya holding the front on his shoulder, pointing it over the river toward the camp. Once again the night was shattered as though there were a whole herd of elephants trumpeting shrilly all around us. When the echoes died away, the camp across the river had fallen silent. Ausu blew into the trumpet again, and this time it was as if a leopard were growling angrily nearby. One of the youths clapped himself under the armpit, as Pygmies frequently do, and said to himself, "That is its voice, just exactly." He clapped himself again with delight, and gave a little growl of his own.

Little more than a minute had passed when Amabosu, the great singer, appeared from the shadows below us. He looked at us without saying anything, without smiling or making any greeting. His eyes had the strange look they often took on when he was singing or playing the drums in a dance in the village. They seemed to be seeing something quite different from what was going on in front of them. He went up to Ausu and took the molimo from him and gently filled the forest with strange sounds—the rumblings and growls of buffalos and leopards, the mighty call of the elephant, the plaintive cooing of the dove. Interspersed were snatches of song, transformed by the trumpet into a sound quite unlike the song of men—richer, softer, more distant and unapproachable.

He continued blowing as we moved off, down the slope and to the bank of the river, but when we plunged into the water and waded across, the two trumpets left us and were carried upstream. They growled and bellowed somewhere behind us as we made our way along the path to the camp. In the clearing the men were standing up to see us arrive, and the women were hurrying about doing what they had to do before shutting themselves up in their huts. The voice of the molimo had warned them that it was time to retire. The children had all been chased inside. One by one leaf doors were

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765 Even though he[1] always
978 made his camp a short distance off it was close enough to be thought
152 of as the same camp, and whether or not we appreciated his presence
621 we thought of his camp and ours as being the same. Even his unwillingness to take part in the molimo was accepted, to maintain some semblance of unity; but this sudden statement made it impossible to ignore Cephu's feeling of rivalry any longer. Rather than cause an open breach, everyone in the main camp kept his thoughts to himself and was silent.

224 About an hour after dawn, four or five youths with their nets and
372 spears went off to light the hunting fire. I went with them, and only when we had crossed the Lelo and were on the other side did they speak. Then it was about trivialities, and soon they were chatting and laughing as though nothing were wrong. Shortly afterward we were joined by half a dozen of the younger married men, the most active hunters, and we lit the fire at the top of the hill. Leaves and twigs were piled around the base of a young tree, and an ember brought from the camp set them ablaze. More leaves were thrown on so that dense clouds of smoke went billowing up to the invisible sky, until finally the flames burst through with a great roar of victory.
[182] There was no great ritual or ceremonial, but somehow this act put the hunters in harmony with the forest and secured its blessing and assistance for the day's hunt. The Pygmies regard fire as the most precious gift of the forest, and by offering it back to the forest they are acknowledging their debt and their dependence.

224 As we sat around waiting for the others, one or two couples passed
[222] by. They were going ahead so they would have extra time for gathering mushrooms on the way. They paused to chat and then walked
224 on, lightly, swiftly, and gaily. Before long the main body of hunters
372 arrived and asked where Cephu was. We had not seen him. It
578 seemed that he had left the camp shortly after us but instead of
• 156 passing by the hunting fire had followed a different path. Someone suggested that he was building a fire of his own. This brought cries

[1] [i.e., Cephu. - Analyst]

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of protest that not even Cephu would do such a thing. There was much shaking of heads, and when Ekianga arrived and was told what had happened he stood still for a moment, then turned around, looking in all directions to see if there was any sign of smoke from another fire. He said just one word, "Cephu," and spat on the ground.

By the time we got to the place where we were to make our first cast of the nets everyone was more silent and miserable than ever. It did not make matters any better to find Cephu there already, contentedly sitting over a fire eating roast plantains. He looked up and greeted us in a friendly way, and when asked why he had followed his own path he opened his eyes wide and softly said that he had misunderstood and taken the wrong trail. There were angry remarks, but Cephu ignored them all and went on munching at his plantain, smiling at everyone in his kind, gentle way.

Ekianga and a few others made a brief reconnaissance, and when they came back they gave instructions as to the best direction for setting up the nets. The womenfolk, who had been foraging around for mushrooms and nuts, picked up their baskets and went ahead with the small children. They trod lightly and made no noise beyond an occasional crunch of a rotten branch, buried deep beneath the carpet of leaves. We all spread out in a long semicircle, each man knowing exactly who should be to his right and who to his left. I went with Maipe, who had been sent by Njobo with his net. We soon lost sight and sound of the others, but Maipe knew just where he would be expected to set up his net, and he took a short cut. I lost all sense of direction and could not even tell on which side of us the women were waiting for the signal to beat in toward our nets. We followed a little stream and paused by an enormous outcrop of huge stone boulders, almost perfectly square in shape, some of them eight feet across each face. Maipe looked around, then sat down to wait. After a few minutes Moke's nephew appeared to our left, stringing his net out through the undergrowth as he came.

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825 starve?" I thought of turkey farms and Thanksgiving, and of the millions of animals reared by our own society with the sole intention of slaughtering them for food.

224 Ekianga was busy cutting up the sondu by the time I reached his net, for it was too large an animal to fit in his wife's basket. Usually game is brought back to camp before it is divided, and in some groups the dead antelope would have been sent back to camp immediately, around the neck and shoulders of one of the youngsters. But here the womenfolk crowded around as Ekianga hacked away, each claiming her share for her family. "My husband lent you his spear. . . ." "We gave your third wife some liver when she was hungry and you were away. . . ." "My father and yours always hunted side by side. . . ." These were all typical arguments, but for the most part they were not needed. Everyone knew who was entitled to a share, and by and large they stuck to the rules.

224 Above all the clamor, and in the process of re-coiling the nets and
578 assembling for the next cast, a disgruntled Cephu appeared and
• 136 complained that he had had no luck. He looked enviously at the sondu and the sindula, but nobody offered him a share. Maipe's mother hurriedly covered the chevrotain with leaves to avoid argument. She worked efficiently, not bothering to take the basket off but using her hands behind her back, and bouncing the basket on her buttocks until the dead animal was completely hidden by the leaves.

We went on for a mile or two and made another cast. Once more Cephu was unlucky, and this time he complained even more loudly, accusing the women of deliberately driving the animals away from his nets. They retorted that he had enough of his own womenfolk there, to which he replied rather ungallantly, "That makes no difference, they are a bunch of lazy empty-heads."

224 They were still arguing when they set off for the third cast. I
123 had caught sight of old Moke and stayed behind to talk to him. He

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This dance[1] was still in progress when the main body of the hunters returned. They strode into camp with glowering faces and threw their nets on the ground outside their huts. Then they sat down, with their chins in their hands, staring into space and saying nothing.

The women followed, mostly with empty baskets, but they were by no means silent. They swore at each other, they swore at their husbands, and most of all they swore at Cephu. Moke looked across at me and smiled. He was skinning the civet.

I tried to find out what had happened, but nobody would say. Kenge, who had been sleeping, came out of our hut and joined the shouting. He was the only male who was not sitting down, and although he was young he had a powerful voice, and a colorful use of language. I heard him saying, "Cephu is an impotent old fool. No, he isn't, he is an impotent old animal—we have treated him like a man for long enough, now we should treat him like an animal. *Animal!*" He shouted the final epithet across at Cephu's camp, although Cephu had not yet returned.

The result of Kenge's tirade was that everyone calmed down and began criticizing Cephu a little less heatedly, but on every possible score: The way he always built his camp separately, the way he had even referred to it as a separate camp, the way he mistreated his relatives, his general deceitfulness, the dirtiness of his camp, and even his own personal habits.

The rest of the hunters came in shortly afterward, with Cephu leading. He strode across the camp and into his own little clearing without a word. Ekianga and Manyalibo, who brought up the rear, sat down at the kumamolimo and announced to the world at large that Cephu had disgraced them all and that they were going to tear down the kumamolimo and abandon the camp and end the molimo. Manyalibo shouted that he wanted everyone to come to the kumamolimo at once, even Cephu. This was a great matter and had to be settled immediately. Kenge, not slow to seize the opportunity

[1] [i.e., the imitation of the leopard--Analyst]

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for reviving his earlier show of wit, relayed Manyalibo's message by standing in midcamp and shouting over in Cephu's direction, *"Nyama'e, nyama'e! Pika'i to, nyama UE!"* (Animal there! Animal there! Come at once, *you*, you animal!") The youngsters all laughed loudly, but the older men paid no attention. This sent Kenge into a sulk and he started calling us all animals, adding that we were a lot of savages, just like the village people. But now not even the youngsters were listening, for Cephu had appeared.

Trying not to walk too quickly, yet afraid to dawdle too deliberately, he made an awkward entrance. For as good an actor as Cephu it was surprising. By the time he got to the kumamolimo everyone was doing something to occupy himself—staring into the fire or up at the tree tops, roasting plantains, smoking, or whittling away at arrow shafts. Only Ekianga and Manyalibo looked impatient, but they said nothing. Cephu walked into the group, and still nobody spoke. He went up to where a youth was sitting in a chair. Usually he would have been offered a seat without his having to ask, and now he did not dare ask, and the youth continued to sit there in as nonchalant a manner as he could muster. Cephu went to another chair where Amabosu was sitting. He shook it violently when Amabosu ignored him, at which he was told, "Animals lie on the ground."

This was too much for Cephu, and he went into a long diatribe about how he was one of the oldest hunters in the group, and one of the best hunters, and that he thought it was very wrong for everyone to treat him like an animal. Only villagers were like animals. Masisi spoke up in his favor and ordered Amabosu to give up his chair. Amabosu did so with a gesture of contempt and moved over to the far side of the group. Moke was the only one to stay completely apart. He sat outside his hut. He had finished skinning the civet and was twisting strands of vine together to make a frame for the hat. He looked peaceful and contented.

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224 765 578 156 Manyalibo stood up and began a rather pompous statement of how everyone wanted this camp to be a good camp, and how everyone wanted the molimo to be a good molimo, with lots of singing, lots of eating, and lots of smoking. But Cephu never took part in the molimo, he pointed out. And Cephu's little group never contributed to the molimo basket. Manyalibo went on, listing the various ways in which Cephu had defaulted and made the camp into a bad camp instead of a good camp, and the molimo a bad molimo. And now, he added, Cephu had made the hunt a bad hunt. He recalled how on the first day, even before the camp was built, we had been presented with an antelope by the forest, but how ever since Cephu had joined us things had gone from bad to worse.

224 765 578 156 593 Cephu tried to interject that the molimo was really none of his business. At this Masisi, who had befriended him over the chair incident, and who had relatives in his camp, rounded on him sharply. He reminded Cephu that he had been glad enough to accept help and food and song when his daughter had died; now that his "mother" had died, why did he reject her? Cephu replied that Balekimito was not his mother. This was what everyone was waiting for. Not only did he name the dead woman, an unheard-of offense, but he denied that she was his mother. Even though there was only [602] [621] the most distant relationship, and that by marriage, it was equivalent to asserting that he did not belong to the same group as Ekianga and Manyalibo and the rest.

578 156 152 224 Ekianga leaped to his feet and brandished his hairy fist across the fire. He said that he hoped Cephu would fall on his spear and kill himself like the animal he was. Who but an animal would steal meat from others? There were cries of rage from everyone, and Cephu burst into tears. Apparently, during the last cast of the nets Cephu, who had not trapped a single animal the whole day long, had slipped away from the others and set up his net in front of them. In this way

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he caught the first of the animals fleeing from the beaters, but he had not been able to retreat before he was discovered.

I had never heard of this happening before, and it was obviously a serious offense. In a small and tightly knit hunting band, survival can be achieved only by the closest co-operation and by an elaborate system of reciprocal obligations which insures that everyone has some share in the day's catch. Some days one gets more than others, but nobody ever goes without. There is, as often as not, a great deal of squabbling over the division of the game, but that is expected, and nobody tries to take what is not his due.

Cephu tried very weakly to say that he had lost touch with the others and was still waiting when he heard the beating begin. It was only then that he had set up his net, where he was. Knowing that nobody believed him, he added that in any case he felt he deserved a better place in the line of nets. After all, was he not an important man, a chief, in fact, of his own band? Manyalibo tugged at Ekianga to sit down, and sitting down himself he said there was obviously no use prolonging the discussion. Cephu was a big chief, and a chief was a villager, for the BaMbuti never have chiefs. And Cephu had his own band, of which he was chief, so let him go with it and hunt elsewhere and be a chief elsewhere. Manyalibo ended a very eloquent speech with *"Pisa me taba"* ("Pass me the tobacco").

Cephu knew he was defeated and humiliated. Alone, his band of four or five families was too small to make an efficient hunting unit. He apologized profusely, reiterated that he really did not know he had set up his net in front of the others, and said that in any case he would hand over all the meat. This settled the matter, and accompanied by most of the group he returned to his little camp and brusquely ordered his wife to hand over the spoils. She had little chance to refuse, as hands were already reaching into her basket and under the leaves of the roof where she had hidden some liver in anticipation of just such a contingency. Even her cooking pot was

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emptied. Then each of the other huts was searched and all the meat taken. Cephu's family protested loudly and Cephu tried hard to cry, but this time it was forced and everyone laughed at him. He clutched his stomach and said he would die; die because he was hungry and his brothers had taken away all his food; die because he was not respected.

The kumamolimo was festive once again, and the camp seemed restored to good spirits. An hour later, when it was dark and fires were flickering outside every hut, there was a great blaze at the central hearth and the men talked about the morrow's hunt. From Cephu's camp came the sound of the old man, still trying hard to cry, moaning about his unfortunate situation, making noises that were meant to indicate hunger. From our own camp came the jeers of women, ridiculing him and imitating his moans.

When Masisi had finished his meal he took a pot full of meat with mushroom sauce, cooked by his wife, and quietly slipped away into the shadows in the direction of his unhappy kinsman. The moaning stopped, and when the evening molimo singing was at its height I saw Cephu in our midst. Like most of us he was sitting on the ground, in the manner of an animal. But he was singing, and that meant that he was just as much a BaMbuti as anyone else.

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# 6

# The Giver of the Law

CEPHU HAD COMMITTED what is probably one of the most heinous crimes in Pygmy eyes, and one that rarely occurs. Yet the case was settled simply and effectively, without any evident legal system being brought into force. It cannot be said that Cephu went unpunished, because for those few hours when nobody would speak to him he must have suffered the equivalent of as many days solitary confinement for anyone else. To have been refused a chair by a mere youth, not even one of the great hunters; to have been laughed at by women and children; to have been ignored by men—none of these things would be quickly forgotten. Without any formal process of

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law Cephu had been firmly put in his place, and it was unlikely he would do the same thing again in a hurry.

This was typical of all Pygmy life, on the surface at least. There was a confusing, seductive informality about everything they did. Whether it was a birth, a wedding, or a funeral, in a Pygmy hunting camp or in a Negro village, there was always an unexpectedly casual, almost carefree attitude. There was, for instance, little apparent specialization; everyone took part in everything. Children had little or no voice in adult affairs, but the only adult activities from which they seemed to be rigidly excluded were certain songs, and of course the molimo. Between men and women there was also a certain degree of specialization, but little that could be called exclusive.

There were no chiefs, no formal councils. In each aspect of Pygmy life there might be one or two men or women who were more prominent than others, but usually for good practical reasons. This showed up most clearly of all in the settling of disputes. There was no judge, no jury, no court. The Negro tribes all around had their tribunals, but not the Pygmies. Each dispute was settled as it arose, according to its nature.

Roughly, there were four ways of punishing offenses, each operating as an efficient deterrent but without necessitating any system of outright punishment. In a small and co-operative group no individual would want the job either of passing judgment or of administering punishment, so like everything else in Pygmy life the maintenance of law was a co-operative affair. Certain offenses, rarely committed, were considered so terrible that they would of themselves bring some form of supernatural retribution. Others became the affair of the molimo, which in its morning rampages showed public disapproval by attacking the hut of the culprit, possibly the culprit himself. Both these types of crime were extremely rare. The more serious of the other crimes, such as theft, were dealt with by a sound thrashing which was administered co-operatively by all who felt inclined to

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and were accorded none of the privileges of the adult forest Pygmy. Above all, they were not allowed to take part in the singing of the men's molimo songs. They may have become adults in the village, but in the forest they were still children.

Far from illustrating the dependence of the Pygmies upon the villagers, the nkumbi illustrates better than anything else the complete opposition of the forest to the village. The Pygmies in the forest consciously and energetically reject all village values. When they are in the village they temporarily adopt its values and customs, not wanting to desecrate their sacred forest values by bringing them into the village. That is why they never sing their sacred songs in the village the way they do in the forest, and why they refuse to consecrate the nkumbi with special music, although every other event of importance in their lives is marked in this way. There is an unbridgeable gulf between the two worlds of the two peoples.

The Pygmies have their own way of growing naturally into adulthood. A boy proves himself capable of supporting a family when he kills his first real game, and proves himself a man when he participates in the elima.

During the whole nkumbi there was only one Pygmy who showed the slightest fear of the consequences of the blatant disregard everyone else showed for the laws of the villagers. That was Aberi, father of Sansiwake—Aberi the ugly, Aberi who was so often the laughingstock of his fellows. It was not that he was afraid of the villagers as people, for after his son's illness he often used to walk right among the instructors and drag his Sansiwake away if he felt they were being too severe with him. And he was as outspoken as any against any mistreatment of the children by the villagers. He particularly criticized Sabani for causing his son's illness. Sabani and the other instructors told Aberi it was a terrible thing to do to criticize the nkumbi doctor.

Not long afterward Aberi became ill. He was so ill that he could

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Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1



Not long afterward Aberi became ill. He was so ill that he could not leave the initiation camp, and he slept on the wooden initiation bed beside the boys, moaning and tossing in his fever. When he recovered he said that he had been bewitched, that the villagers were trying to kill him. He even attacked his brother Masalito for having broken just about every rule in the book.

The Pygmies practice no sorcery or witchcraft, but they know it is rife among their neighbors and they have seen enough of it in action to be uneasy about it. Aberi was one of the few who really believed in it, and who knew what real fear was. He knew fear not only of being bewitched, but of being accused of witchcraft; for his wife, Tamasa, the kindly woman disfigured with yaws, was frequently accused by the villagers. The villagers felt that anyone cursed with such a dreadful deformity must be evil. On several occasions I heard Pygmies accuse old Sau, the mother of Amabosu the young singer, of being a witch. But although they used the village word, it had a different meaning. They were merely accusing her of making trouble. They sometimes said the same thing of other old people who were, as old Pygmies often are, strong-minded and obstinate.

The villagers, however, believe that one can be possessed of a substance which gives one supernatural powers and compels the use of them to harm others. Sometimes it works in such a way that the witch may not even be aware of what he or she is doing, and various forms of divination are used to test suspects. The only time the Pygmies think seriously about witchcraft is when they are in the village, or when villagers visit them in the forest. A single villager visiting a forest hunting camp can bring his evil with him, but when he departs it departs with him.

It was curious that Aberi, the one who feared this evil most, should apparently die by it. He used to tell a story of how one night in the village he had been going to the latrine when he was caught from behind, as if by a hand clutching at his shoulder. But there was